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We Have to Stay in the Dirty Business of Spying

That bombshell out of Great Britain about the expulsion of 105 Soviet diplomats and officials for spying has had one predictable effect.

It has revived editorial comment and cocktail chatter about our own Central Intelligence Agency and the "covers" it uses for spies. And it has aroused new spasms of naive comment to the effect that our country ought to get out of the cloak-and-dagger business.

Well, just as sure as Mata Hari was a woman, the expulsions will not halt massive Soviet spying in Britain -- or in the United States, at the United Nations or anywhere else.

Some Americans just can't get over the sanctimonious notion that spying is a dirty business that, like dandruff, we can wash right out of our hair.

Some spying is a sordid, dangerous business. It involves blackmail, sexual entrapment, peeping tomism, double-crosses, political and character assassinations -- and outright murder.

Yet, spying is not nearly as bad as are some of the alternatives to having a good system of intelligence. Not many Americans would accept vulnerability to a sneak nuclear attack as the price for getting rid of spies.

The fact is that if we are to move closer to peace we are likely to go through a period of more spying rather than less.

Millions of sensitive, intelligent Americans deplore the fact that in the decade of the 1960s the United States and Soviet Union poured a trillion dollars into arms. These Americans know that we shall never rescue our cities or save man's environment or find a cure for cancer unless we can

stop the arms race and its mad waste of wealth.

But the glaring truth is that distrust stands in the way of a curtailment in the manufacture of horrible weapons, not to mention the destruction of those already in arsenals. Steps toward disarmament will proceed only as rapidly as intelligence procedures make it possible for rival countries to be reasonably sure that they will not be destroyed by the perfidy of a potential enemy.

As far ahead as man can see, the United States and the Soviet Union will launch sophisticated satellites whose fantastic cameras will record troop movements, missile emplacements, production centers for fissionable materials, weapons storage areas and other vital information bearing on the other country's (or China's) intentions.

It is taken for granted by American officials that the Soviet Union will keep 30 or so trawlers operating off the shores of the United States, their powerful, sensitive electronic gear intercepting U.S. diplomatic and military messages, picking up conversation at U.S. airfields and bases, or even plotting the noise patterns emanating from key U.S. cities.

The Soviets likewise take it for granted that the United

States will use ships like the USS Pueblo, special aircraft and other measures to conduct electronic intelligence -- and that it will go on spending billions to intercept other countries, messages and break their codes.

John F. Kennedy was frightened by Khrushchev at Vienna because intelligence told the young President that we were not as prepared to fight as we needed to be should the Russian carry out his threats regarding Berlin. Later, Kennedy could stand eyeball-to-eyeball with Khrushchev during the Cuban missiles crisis because intelligence operations, including the U2 flights of the Eisenhower years, made it clear that the United States was stronger if it came to nuclear war. Moreover, our intelligence was such that we knew Khrushchev knew who was stronger.

President Nixon will go to Peking with greater feelings of confidence because sophisticated intelligence procedures have made it possible for him to know many things that the Chinese do not know he knows.

There are "puritans" who say that they can never accept this as a necessary activity, for to do so would be to compromise with immorality and indecency. So it becomes a ritual of cleanliness for them to launch attacks on the CIA and other American intelligence operations whenever a news item pops up to remind them of their revulsion to "dirty tricks."

But that story out of London is just another reminder of how mean the real world is -- and that the peacemakers very often are those who keep us alert to both the dangers and the promises of that real world.

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STATINTL

Washington Whispers

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In briefings by intelligence analysts, Air Force Secretary Robert C. Seamans, Jr., and other top officials were told that Russia's new swing-wing strategic bomber could hit targets in any part of the U. S. and then fly on to Red Cuba. The plane—which Western experts identify by the code name "Backfire"—is equipped for aerial refueling.

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Western experts on the Middle East say that many young Egyptians sent to the Soviet Union for flight training are being washed out and shipped home for failure to pass health, educational or aptitude tests. As a result, training of Egyptian pilots is falling far behind schedule—and the Egyptian Air Force has more warplanes than it has qualified fliers.

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As camouflage against observations by U. S. spy satellites, the Russians are "roofing over" some of their big military-construction projects, according to intelligence reports.